MONTEREY NEWS

January 2009
VOLUME XXXIX · Number 1

The Town

The Weather Matters

During the Friday, December 12th ice storm, Wayne Burkhart, chairman of the Select Board, declared an emergency situation. Gareth Backhaus, Chief of Police, is the emergency manager, along with Director of Operations Maynard Forbes. The communications center in emergencies is the Monterey Firehouse. Due to the emergency situation, Monterey should be reimbursed by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) for a percentage of the expenses caused by the storm.

The storm caused major damage from downed trees due to ice on Chestnut Hill, Beartown Mountain, Cronk, Art School, Griswold, Fairview, Brett, and Mt. Hunger Roads. There were also some washouts. The highway crew worked about 36 hours straight during the storm; the Select Board commended them on a job well done. By Saturday morning, everything was reopened and passable, with the exception of Brett Road.

Hillel and Janet Maximon met with the Select Board on December 15 regarding storm debris left on Beartown Mountain Road. Maynard Forbes said that the debris would be removed once the roads were made passable; the Maximons suggested

Joe Baker

After the December 12th ice storm, Hupi Road. Many Monterey homes were without power, some for days.

that orange cones could be placed in the meantime so that people would not hit the debris. The Maximons commended the Police Chief and Officer Martin. While they were blocked in on Beartown Mountain Road with no provisions after the ice storm, the Police Chief checked on their well-being, and Officer Martin later dropped off two bags of food.

Fire Chief Ray Tryon came in to discuss the snowstorm of the weekend of December 20th. The procedures of NIMS (the National Incident Management System, a division of FEMA,) were reviewed. Keswick Retreat Center on Chestnut Hill Road is the designated emergency shelter for Monterey, although it has never been used. The local hotels and motels were unusually full, due to the large numbers of people without power after the December 12th ice storm.

Lake Matters

Emails from Dan Moriarty and Stephen Rose, from Lake Buel, were discussed. Both emails expressed concern that Lake Garfield's flood control device remained open after drawdown and during the latest heavy rainstorm. There was minor flooding on Lake Buel, about thirteen inches. The Select Board felt, in the absence of contradicting data, that other sources contribute more to the water level of Lake Buel than any discharge from Lake Garfield into the Konkapot River.

(Lake Garfield was first dammed in the mid 1800s to help provide water power to a Connecticut company. It is 272 acres with the addition of Brewer Pond, which was created when a new dam was built in 1972. Lake Buel, which is in both New Marlborough and Monterey, covers 196 acres. It was also dammed years ago, which doubled its size. Both lakes are considered Great Ponds, and are eutrophic, which means that the weeds must be controlled in order to prevent the natural progression to becoming swampland. This process is not as severe as in the eastern part of the state, however. Lake Buel in addition, has a limestone base that prevents problems from acid rain.)

The Select Board reviewed a grant proposal for Lake Buel from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and voted to send a letter of support.

Michael Storch asked if the Park Commission could stack or store the folding chairs on Lake Garfield town beach so that the beach would look neat. Wayne Burkhart agreed to follow up with Leroy Thorpe, Park Commission chairman. Mr. Storch asked about the status of removing the expensive Verizon telephone being rented for the beach with a less expensive phone, called a "prison phone," that will transmit only local calls and 911 calls. Wayne Burkhart will check on this with Thorpe.

Police Blotter

- Motor vehicle stops ending with criminal complaints (one uninsured and one unlicensed operator).
- Domestic complaint.
- Suspicious activity, Seven Arts Road.
- Trees on power line, Sandisfield Road.
- Abandoned 911 calls, Beartown Mountain Road, Mt. Laurel Way.
- Accident on Fairview Road by the beaver dam; owner left the scene, car was towed, and charges are being pressed.
- The Select Board questioned a camper/truck that is frequently parked on the flats on Main Road near Curtis Road; Chief Backhaus said the person is an artist and is painting scenes from the back of the camper.
- False alarms, Beartown Mountain Road, Sylvan Road, Mt. Hunger Estates.
- Served a couple of summonses.

Highway Matters

The main highway concern this month was cleanup after the December 12th ice storm (see "Weather Matters" above).

The Select Board discussed the need for a maintenance contract for the generator with Director of Operations Maynard

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Forbes. Forbes said that while his department can change the oil for the generator, they can't service it, and the maintenance contract is necessary.

Maynard said that the "Hidden Driveway" signs that were posted on Fairview Road are too high, because the ground was frozen when they were installed, and that they would be fixed soon.

The motion detectors outside the Town Hall need to be moved so that the lights come on when you leave the building, and not when you are a quarter of the way across the parking lot.

The Board agreed to sign a contract with Brown Oil locking in at $3.57 a gallon. (This contract was made verbally.)

Forbes asked whom residents should call when a tree falls; the Police Department should be called, and they will determine whether to call the power company or the Highway Department.

Financial Matters

The town has $8,428 available from years ago from a deferred payment loan program which no longer exists. The money was lent to homeowners who paid the loans back when they sold their houses. This money can be used for home repairs; there aren't any stipulations. Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier suggested that we ask the Berkshire Community Action Council if there are any lower income families in Monterey that would qualify for the funds. It was suggested the funds be used to repair the roof on Bally Gally, the rental house on the Edith Wilson property now owned by the town. The Select Board asked Gauthier to find out if this is an option.

Gauthier reported that the money used to pay Constable Ray Tryon for the election setup comes from the Meeting Hall line item, which has $935.

Barbara questioned paying Building Commissioner Don Torrico for additional time spent doing inspections beyond his normal working hours. Her impression was that Don is a salaried employee. Torrico had understood that the money to pay for additional inspections, above the normal ten hours, would be charged to the camp involved, and that he would be paid when the town was reimbursed. It was noted that Torrico is paid a salary, which he understood was based on a certain number of hours worked.

The Select Board was split on this question. It was decided that because they had agreed to it earlier, Torrico should be paid, but that the situation be reviewed and commented on by Town Counsel. The Board decided that any further monies paid to the Building Commissioner be submitted at Town Meeting for a vote.

Barbara Gauthier asked whether a bill has been sent to the Select Board for the Lake Garfield plant study; it has not. Barbara then called P. Edelstein about this.

Janet Cathcart of the Employee Compensation Committee discussed the following with the Select Board: >

Maynard Forbes

Ice storm aftermath, Beartown Mountain Road.

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- The committee's focus for this year's budget will be benefits and part-time employee's salaries. They want to expand employee reviews to include merit based raises in addition to COLA raises.
- Personnel issues should be addressed prior to Town Meeting at a Select Board meeting, not at Town Meeting.
- The committee feels that the Highway Department laborer and foreman positions are dramatically underpaid compared to surrounding towns.
- Part-time employees are mostly on par with surrounding towns.

Dan Moriarty of the Finance Committee met with the Select Board and agreed to have the Finance Committee review the issue of extra compensation for salaried employees.

Moriarty also requested a joint meeting with the Monterey Health Agent and the Conservation Commissions and Select Boards of Monterey and New Marlborough to discuss Lake Buel issues. The Lake Buel Watershed Committee will set up and host the meeting.

Building Inspection Matters

Building Commissioner Don Torrico reviewed the new trenching laws and the permitting process. Applications pertaining to public and private ways will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Operations. All other trenches will be reviewed and approved by the Building Official, and the permit will be issued through the Building Department for both jurisdictions. There will be a fee of $35. It is up to the individual to apply.

The Select Board approved Torrico's recommendation to appoint Robert Krupski as the Plumbing and Gas Inspector, for a two-year term.

It was noted that complaints have been made about the Electrical Inspector regarding the promptness of responding to inspection requests; also Barbara Gauthier said he was not prompt in turning over his fees. Don Torrico will review this and make recommendations.

The plumbing and gas inspections fees will be changed to $55 per inspection, unlimited fixtures. The increase will go in to the General Fund. Fees should be submitted directly to Town Hall Interdepartmental Secretary Melissa Noe, who will turn them over to the Treasurer. Re-inspection fees for the Building Commissioner and sub-inspectors, now assessed at $35, will be raised to $55. The Select Board approved these three actions.

Don Torrico is currently taking a class to better understand the funding of a regional hearing officer.

Miscellaneous

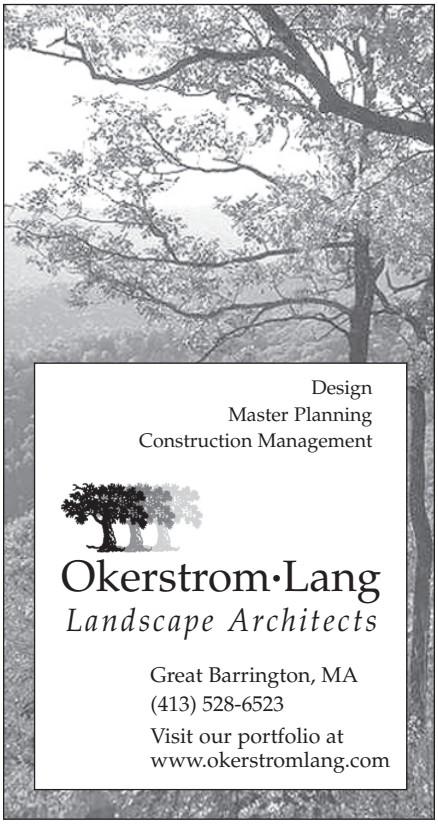
The Select Board approved the transfer of the annual liquor license for the Monterey General Store from Riccardo Boehm to present owner Kenn Basler.

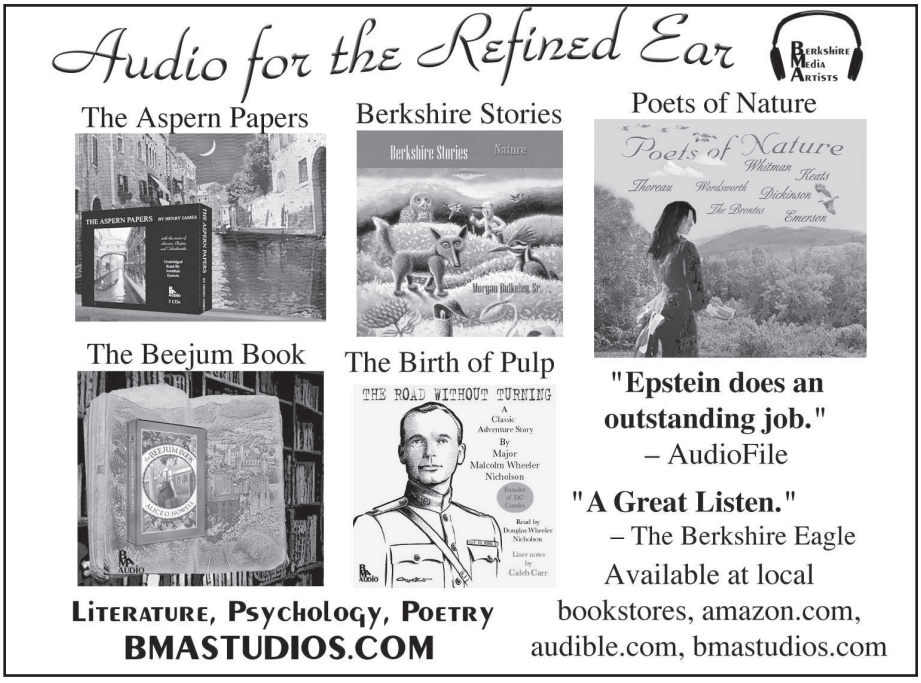
Michael Storch reported that 319 broadband surveys were completed for the town of Monterey; more than half were from second-home owners.

The Select Board nominated Anne Marie (Mari) Enoch to fill the vacancy at the Zoning Board of Appeals created when alternate Susan Cooper left Monterey for her husband's sabbatical.

The Select Board discussed what to do with the various Edith Wilson rugs and paintings now stored at Lew Scheffey's barn. Some suggestions were: loaning the rugs to the Bidwell House; appraising paintings and selling them at a public auction to benefit the McLaughlin-Wilson Scholarship Fund (managed by the Berkshire Taconic Foundation). It was agreed to discuss the matter further with the McLaughlin-Wilson House Committee.

The Select Board reviewed Town Counsel's response regarding appointing the current Planning Board Secretary as a replacement for Planning Board member John Sellew, who resigned earlier in the year. The Planning Board and Select Board members unanimously approved the appointment of Bridget Krans to the Planning Board member. Bridget will file





the disclosure form recommended by the Ethics Commission.

The Select Board reviewed a letter from Marc White of Kutsher's Sports Academy, who would like to clear up some past and present misunderstandings and obstacles. The Board agreed that our Town Bylaws need to be updated to encourage growth in Monterey. Mr. White asked why New England Keswick is allowed certain activities and permits and his camp is not; the Board feels it is because Keswick falls under another bylaw. A representative from New England Keswick met with the Board of Health on December 15 to make sure they had the proper permits. The Board suggested contacting Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to help us amend our bylaws to allow yearlong camps and banquets to be held in Monterey by special permit; funding will come from the Planning Board. The Select Board forwarded Mr. White's letter to the Building Commissioner and the Board of Health, because some of Mr. White's comments concerned them.

The Select Board reviewed the Open Meeting law and confirmed that any and all town boards and committees must keep minutes.

— Sue Protheroe

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TOWN OF MONTEREY

Skating Rink Hours / Winter 2008–2009

Firehouse Pavilion

MONDAY–FRIDAY

Dawn to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey Time
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Public Skating (may be closed for ice-making at this time; skaters may be asked to leave the ice)
7:00 p.m. on,	Hockey
except Thursday	Public Skating

SATURDAY

9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Kids / Family Hockey
Noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	CLOSED
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Public Skating

SUNDAY

9 a.m. to Noon	Pickup Hockey
Noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
After 5 p.m.	CLOSED for major icemaking repair

Skating rink hours are dawn to 9 p.m.; if finishing a game after 9 p.m., please be considerate of your neighbors and keep it quiet.

Monterey Park Commission: Leroy Thorpe, 528-2164; Diana Piepho; Bridget Krans, 528-3638; Valerie Zantay, 528-9222

Ice Maintenance: Steve Graves, Rick Andrus, Mark Makuc

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Brush Burning Season Opens

Each year, the state allows some Massachusetts towns, including Monterey, to conduct open burning. It is important to remember that when burning, you are subject to certain requirements and responsibilities issued and enforced by the State Fire Marshals Office, DEP, and your local Fire Department. These guidelines include the following:

- Permits can be obtained from January 15 to April 30.
- You must obtain a permit for open burning from the Monterey Fire Department by calling **528-1734.**
- Residents must call on the day they will be burning; no permits are issued ahead of time. The permit is good for one day only.
- Burning hours start at 10 a.m. and all fires must be out by 4 p.m.
- Burning materials will be confined to brush only. **All other materials are prohibited.**
- Burning piles will be kept small and controllable.
- No burning within 75 ft. of a building.
- Have a method of extinguishment and tools available.
- Never leave the fire unattended for any reason.
- Permits are issued weather permitting. Burning is not allowed every day.
- Don't wait until the end of April; you will be disappointed if you wait till the last minute.
- Burning season will not be extended.

Make sure you call for a permit at 528-1734 and leave your name, the address of where you are burning, and a phone number.

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.....7–9 p.m.

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From the Tax Collector

The Real Estate and Personal Property tax bills for the third quarter of fiscal year 2009 have been mailed. Payments are due February 2, 2009. At this time, the Board of Assessors has not yet completed the revaluation process mandated by the state. Therefore, the third quarter tax bills are PRELIMINARY and based on last year's assessments and tax rate.

The fourth quarter bill containing the actual tax amount will be mailed in late March and will be due May 1, 2009. The fourth quarter bill will reflect the new assessments and the new tax rate. The Office of the Board of Assessors will be mailing reassessment letters to all taxpayers within the next sixty days.

Questions regarding tax bills should be directed to the Tax Collector at 413-528-1443 x117. Questions regarding assessments should be directed to the Board of Assessors at 413-528-1443 x115.

— Mari Enoch,
Monterey Tax Collector

January Community Potluck: Positive Aging

The festive crowd at the December Potluck Dinner was treated to a fascinating genealogical case history search by Keren Weiner. We are very grateful to her for an educational glimpse into how one can research one's own family history.

For the January Potluck, we have Lin Shreiber, local Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and "Retirement Revolutionary," who will be presenting "The Power of Positive Aging: What's Change Got to do with it?" Lin is a master at using change for exciting transitions in life. She says she "loves helping people step out of the often deadening fear of life changes and transitions, and into the enlivening world where these same changes become the creative tools for living fully into the next stage of life." Lin is featured on the PBS series *Boomers: Redefining Life After Fifty,* and is the author of *The ABCs of Revolutionizing Retirement*.

The next Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil, and a plate and silverware for yourself. All are welcome—maybe we'll have a midwinter thaw!

— Kyle Pierce

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Documentary Films for Community Discussion

Jan. 17: *Pete Seeger, the Power of Song*

One Saturday night per month, January through April, free films will be shown in the Monterey UCC Social Room, or Church Basement, across from the General Store. All are welcome to attend. The first will be *Pete Seeger, the Power of Song*, on Saturday, January 17, at 7 p.m. Besides being a historic trip through the American folk music revival of the 1950s–70s, this is an inspiring film about people. Through the McCarthy Red-scare witch hunts, to the wars and economic hardships of the last six decades, to environmental action on the Hudson River, Pete Seeger has never given up, never stopped singing, and neither should we.

In the coming months we'll be seeing these films: *Body of War, The Conscientious Objector,* and *Mountaintop Removal*. Please call Bonner McAllester (528-9385) for information and dates. The dates will also appear in the *Monterey News* calendar each month.

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Joe Baker

Bartholomew's Cobble January Events

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Saturdays January through March,
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Climb Hurlburt's Hill, then slip, slide, sled, ski, or trek to the Visitor's Center for free hot drinks. *Members and Sheffield Residents: FREE. Nonmembers: FREE with admission.*

Birds along the River
Saturday, January 17, 2–3:30 p.m.

Enjoy a walk with a naturalist to look for the colorful winter ducks and eagles often seen in the winter. *Members: Individual $4; Family $12. Nonmembers: Individual $6; Family $15. Please pre-register to 413-229-8600.*

Bartholomew's Cobble is located on Weatogue Road in Sheffield. Regular admission FREE for members of the Trustees of Reservations and Sheffield residents. Non-members $5 per adult, $1 per child. For information or to register, please call 413-229-8600 or email bcobble@ttor.org.

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Letter from College

Pitfalls of Presidential Power

Are presidents imperial, or imperiled? How much power do presidents really possess? Can we find it in ourselves to be sympathetic toward presidents regardless of how we view their actions? In reference to the current president, I am aware that I may be pushing the limits of many people's tolerance. I am counting on the holiday spirit a bit, hoping many of you are still basking in the glow of good food and family gatherings, and will indulge my topic of the month. Rest assured that I am not defending decisions made by the Bush administration, or their consequences. As a new administration arrives in Washington, and the old administration departs for Texas, it seems an opportune time to look at the presidency as an institution, in a historical context. Presidential power is an academic sector of expertise, nuanced in such works as Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power*. Neustadt distinguishes between formal—Constitutional—powers and the president's ability to persuade and bargain. They are interrelated, but I am taking a constitutional perspective.

The concerns guiding the Framers as they designed the Constitution stemmed from their experience under the British monarchy; they were mistrustful of government and fearful of tyrannical rule. At the same time, the Articles of Confederation that first governed the thirteen colonies after they gained independence was ineffective for running a new nation. Our system of separate institutions sharing power was a response to these concerns and needs. Discussions surrounding the structure of the executive branch were primarily concerned about the balance between limited power and sufficient energy for the executive to make decisions and lead when necessary—such as in times of war. This debate over specific presidential powers was never fully resolved or clarified in the Constitution and thus continues today.

Congress and the president are both elected by constituencies, and therefore each claims legitimacy. In matters of foreign policy, there is tension between the executive and legislative branches as Congress attempts to provide oversight and hold the executive accountable, while the president attempts to act. This tension is seen as early as 1793 when Washington issued a proclamation of neutrality in the war between Britain and France. Some argued that the president did not have the power to make such a declaration, that such authority resided with Congress, while others countered that he did. A comparison of the wording in Article I with the wording in Article II reveals that while certain powers reside in a legislature, the powers of the executive rest in a president. Congress's powers are delineated in far more detail than those of the president, and hence a president can choose to follow a narrow or broad interpretation of his executive powers.

Over the course of American history, presidents have done just that. President Taft decided that he could do nothing if the Constitution did not explicitly provide for it; Theodore Roosevelt believed he could do anything the Constitution did not directly prohibit. At the Constitutional Convention, the Framers carved out specific authorities from the states to invest in a national government; the president as the national sovereign is understood to represent our nation in relations with other countries, and hence has greater potential power in foreign policy issues. Since the beginning of the modern presidency, when FDR's New Deal brought the federal government into the lives of citizens to an unprecedented level, the president's stature as a national symbol has increased. Presidents feel the increased public expectations that accompanied this institutional change, and they may respond accordingly.

September 11 focused the country's need for leadership on one man. President Bush responded rapidly to the tragedy and his approval ratings reached ninety percent. In the end, such political capital was a rally-round-the-flag effect; it did not increase his popularity indefinitely or

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change his governing mandate. The president interpreted his constitutional powers as the Commander in Chief broadly, and after witnessing the first Gulf War from the Bush 41 White House, George W. Bush believed his father had made a mistake by not using his political capital to finish Saddam Hussein. The younger Bush did not want to repeat that mistake, and his administration was wary of the Iraqi dictator. Among the many mistakes that the Bush administration made in Iraq after 2003, one particular error cost the president domestically. He exercised his constitutional powers broadly, but there is no foreign constituency. As the war became even more unpopular, and Hurricane Katrina damaged his domestic reputation profoundly, the midterm elections in 2006 propelled the opposition party to a majority in Congress. It seems that there were some consequences to Bush's presidential power due to his poor foreign policy decisions; it is possible that no one in his immediate circle of advisors bothered to assess the domestic fallout.

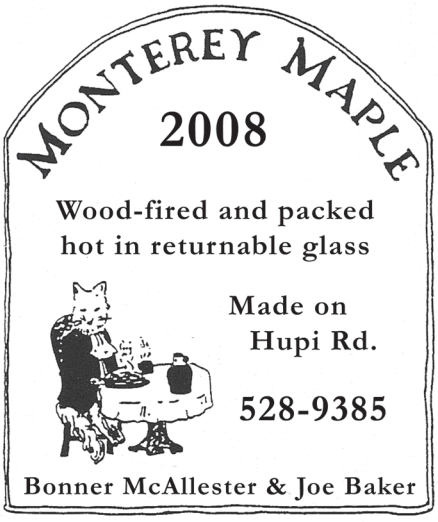
An energetic executive can become a concern for democracy. The Framers were under no illusions about the nature of humankind. While almost anyone can become president, the Framers knew that such a person would not necessarily be of a higher moral standard. That is one reason why we have the system of government we have today, why each branch needs the other to get things done. An energetic executive can be necessary, whether in some instances of foreign policy, or even for Barack Obama on a domestic level; many are hoping for energetic leadership after he takes office. Power can be accumulated to dangerous levels and the Framers were aware of this. Perhaps the Bush administration is an example of the institutional limitations of presidential power.

Glynis Oliver

The Konkapot behind the Monterey Post Office, New Year's Eve, 2009.

On January 20, Barack Obama takes the oath of office on the Bible used by Abraham Lincoln. Our sixteenth president came long before the modern presidency ever existed, but he interpreted the Constitution broadly, deciding to take any measures necessary to preserve the Union, even suspending the right of habeas corpus. Today he is widely regarded as our greatest president, or at least one of the top three. It is possible that history will judge George W. Bush more favorably than we do now. Soon a new president will face the same uncertainties and institutional traps as the forty-three men before him. It is not an easy position and hopefully his pragmatism and wisdom will serve him well. A little sympathy could go a long way as he navigates the pitfalls of his new job.

— Tarsi Dunlop



CHP Offers After-School Kids' Kitchen Classes

Community Health Programs (CHP) Nutrition Services is once again offering their popular After-School Kids' Kitchen classes for 5-to-12-year-olds beginning Wednesday, January 7, at the CHP Nutrition Center, 94 West Avenue, Great Barrington. The program will run continuously throughout the winter. New participants are welcomed throughout the course.

The Kid's Kitchen features hands-on food preparation and tasting experiences. During the process kids learn about nutritional facts, food safety, making healthy balanced food choices, and the value of local farms in our community.

"This after-school program is so much more than just a cooking and nutrition class," said Robert Hoechster, CHP Nutritionist and teacher of the class. "It is about children building positive, lifelong relationships with food, with themselves, and with their community."

The class costs $12 per child per week, or $30 per child for 3 classes. A sliding-scale fee structure is available for those who qualify.

For more information or to pre-register for the class (required), please call CHP Nutrition Services at 413-429-8110.

CHP Nutrition Services provides the community with comprehensive nutrition and wellness programs for all ages, offering clinical nutrition counseling. In addition to nutrition counseling and education, CHP Nutrition Services offers cooking classes for children and adults, a Farmers' Market during the growing season, and innovative community nutrition programs.

CHP's mission is to provide the best quality health care and wellness services to the people of the central and southern Berkshires, and to improve the health status of the community by doing so. The agency is built on the belief that all people should be entitled to the same high-quality health care and related services whether they can afford to pay for care or not. CHP serves over 6,000 individuals annually through the CHP Health Center on the 4th floor of Fairview Hospital; CHP WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program; CHP First Steps early intervention program; the CHP Family Network/Family Center; HCAP (Healthy Communities Access Program), a mobile outreach treatment team; CHP Barrington OB/GYN; the CHP Dental Center; the South Berkshire Youth Coalition (SBYC); the Neighborhood Health Center in Pittsfield; and the Women's Health Network/Men's Health Partnership (WHN/MHP) Program. Call 413-528-9311 for more information.

Drop Box for Monterey News Submissions

Thanks to Kenn Basler at the Monterey General Store, the *News* now has a convenient drop box in the center of town where submissions may be left without going through the post office or trekking out to the editor's home. The box is on the door on the loading dock at the store. We invite and encourage submissions from readers—articles, drawings, photographs, announcements, poems, signed letters, or surprise us with something new. Just leave them in the drop box and the editor will pick them up.

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Writer's Group at Bartholomew's Cobble

A nature-inspired writing group begins this winter at Bartholomew's Cobble on the second Sunday of each month. Sessions combine outdoor walking with indoor writing. Emerging and experienced writers of poems, songs, memoirs, essays, and fiction are welcome! The group will be facilitated by local writing instructor and poet Pauline Clarke with Trustees of Reservations naturalist Tammis Coffin. They will share techniques for tuning into moment and place with the senses and the imagination.

Bartholomew's Cobble is a place of great interest and beauty, with winter ducks and eagles appearing along the river, the tracks of bobcat and coyote in the fields, and some very large trees. It is registered as a National Natural Landmark for its exceptional scenic value and natural diversity. Former *New York Times* nature columnist Hal Borland lived just down the road from Bartholomew's Cobble, and many of his fine pieces of writing center around the hills, forests, fields, and river of the Weatogue Valley that this group of writers will explore.

Pauline Clarke holds a Master's Degree in Writing from Vermont College. From 1990–2005, she published a column of nature-related and local color essays in the *Berkshire Record*. She is a writing tutor and has taught writing workshops through Berkshire Community College. Tammis Coffin, M.A., has led nature-inspired writing workshops for Inkberry, The Thoreau Society, Massachusetts State Parks, and National Fish & Wildlife.

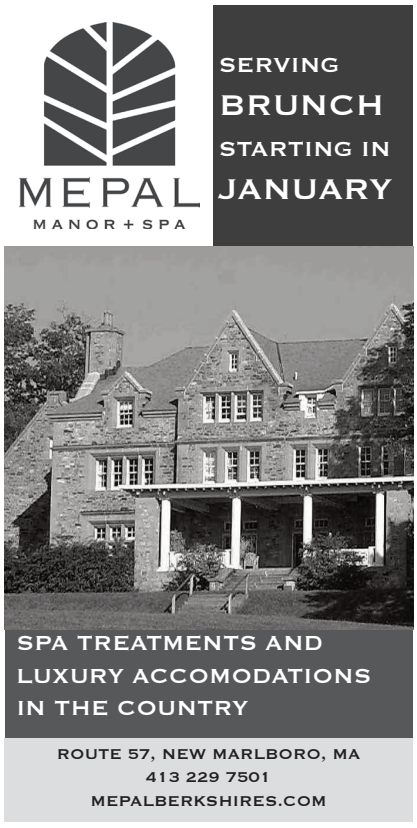
The cost of the writing group is by donation to The Trustees of Reservations. The location is at the Bartholomew's Cobble Visitor Center on Weatogue Road, Sheffield. The group meets January 11, February 8, and March 8 from 1 to 4 p.m. To learn more, or to register, contact Tammis at The Trustees of Reservations at 413-298-3239 x3003 or send an email to tcoffin@ttor.org.

The Trustees of Reservations preserve for public enjoyment, thirteen great properties in the Berkshires and one hundred properties statewide. The Berkshires Regional Office is based in Stockbridge. To learn more, to volunteer, or to become a member, please call 413-298-3239 x3000, visit at www.thetrustees.org, or email westregion@ttor.org.

ॐ

Glynis Oliver

Downy woodpecker and tufted titmouse.



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Prometheus

He who feels
the golden tides of the god
wash through his soul
who in his friable self
crumbles, surrenders, and dissolves
all element to light –
who has flown the inner winds of the moon
gathered the stars in his hands
in penitential night –

he who sees
those lucent rings of love
about a diamond earth
sleeps within her and dreams in her sweet breath
and, after, flies still trembling
the numinous stark darkness of symbolic death
then speeds through apostolic space
to find his own lost universal face –

he who finds
the diatonic need of gods
for a string's pluck
and a scented dewed diadem of flower
is now shattered by the tick of simple
in a crowded hour –

he who reads an alphabet of leaves
touches the Great Tree

sent on a quest of whispers
ravels the cliffs of his bones
swims in his own blood
through the caverns of his heart
learns the trined quaternity
of his every part
till shot out his skull in wonder
with a great and bitter cry –
who now has felt the tears of time
in his inconstant eye
has lost his senses to find sense
is reaching as a son
in passion for a father's fire
to bring immortal music
to a mortal lyre

recoil from Prometheus!
flee him, flee!
he but disturbs us
to our other, our own divinity!

love ever ends what time began
yet, man sets out to kill the god in him
and god, the man.

— Alice O. Howell

Beyond the Stone Fences

In summertime
through our Berkshire hills
we treasure our dirt roads
that wind, ascend, descend
like the grapevines
that snake the old trees,
drowsing in the sun.
Dust, ruts, gravel
and view slow the traveler.
A pheasant drums nearby,
perhaps to it's foraging mate.

Large, ancient sugar maples
guard the road protectively,
a tunnel-effect of orange
in autumn, erasing the sky.
The tangled roots are exposed.
Wild honeysuckle meanders
in the wrinkled light of the woods.
Shattered petals of wild
cherry scatter when
a rabbit scuttles by us,
rattling the shadows so
even the mosquitoes gawk.

Light bursts through the leaves,
dappling the winding lanes.
A red fox barks from the hemlocks,
unaware of nature's restlessness.
Dainty Queen Anne's lace
grows in every meadow.
Tall loosestrife inhabits the marshes,
the purple bruising the skyline.
Crickets have wing mandolins,
their songs bittersweet.
Look overhead.
Newly fledged young swallows
dot the wires.

Warblers and thrushes sing
to us from the thickets.
Often wild turkeys cross the roads,
yearning to be elsewhere,
rushing from one place to another.
Hemlocks cluster in ravines,
full of spurts and flutterings.
Occasional clearings,
empty and restful to the eye,
surprise us when clouds
float by like lint
over puddles and stone fences.

—Nancy Adams

Are the Stars Exhausted?

The stars must be weary
of shining lambently bright,
sparkling for us
in the dark soul of night.

Perhaps clouds, like angels,
cover each flashing gleam,
putting stars to sleep,
snuffing each beam.

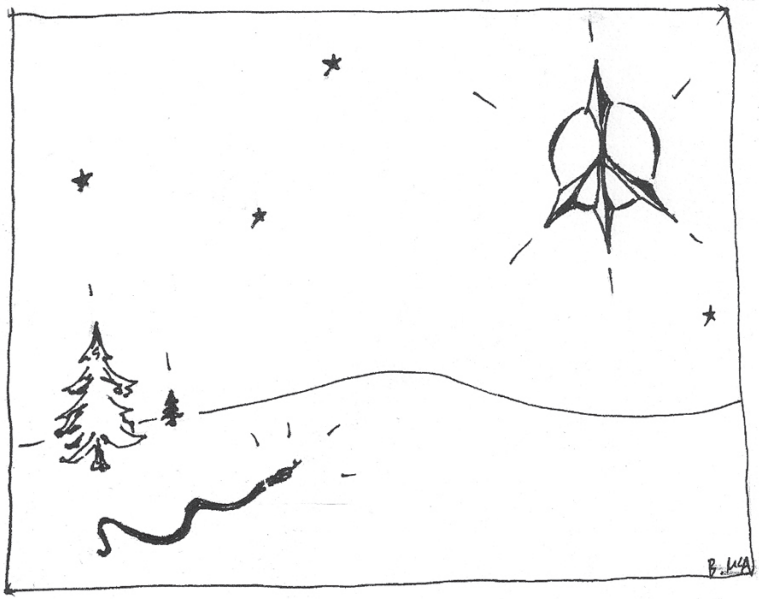
What happens in a turbulent blow
when Thor rants and roars?
Can all those luminous stars
crowd in indoors?

— Nancy Adams

Evil on the Table

"OOOh! That's evil! Get that out of here—what's it doing here?"

Christmas dinner, our house. We put out the little crèche figures, made so long ago by Joe's mom: wise kings, Mary and Joseph, teeny baby, shepherd or two, and then of course the blessed animals that are generally part of that sweet scene. An ox, some sheep, and one somewhat interspecific ungulate with floppy ears. Years ago our own teeny daughter concluded this one must be Jesus, since she couldn't otherwise recognize it. We know now it is a donkey, but we sometimes let it stand in the center, to be admired and to receive homage. In fact, we like to give equal time in the center to all the little porcelain figures.



We go further than that. We invite guests to the scene, such as an oversized ceramic mouse bathing its tail, a wooden elephant, and a gigantic silver dowitcher with a necklace of red berries from a black alder in our swamp. There is also a blue-grey ceramic harbor seal from Scotland, and a turquoise paper peace crane.

The evil guest was none of these. It was the little ring-necked snake, *Diadophis punctatus*. I picked it up in a museum shop years ago and it is made of rubber. Our snake is nine inches long, dark matte grey above with a yellow belly and a yellow neck ring. It is an accurate replica except it says "China" on the belly.

Around here we don't see these snakes in winter, except for the one on the kitchen table. Like the other reptiles, they cool down and hibernate, emerging in the spring. Even so we almost never see them, as they stay hidden under leaves and like damp places. Also they are a good color for camouflage, except for that belly and little ring. Some subspecies have a brighter belly, even orange to red-orange near the tail. These will raise the tail in a coil, sometimes called a "shield," when threatened. It makes a startling flash and could frighten a predator.

In spring or fall the little snakes mate. In a fall mating the fertilization will be delayed until the following year. Eggs are laid in late June and hatch in August, with the babies looking just like tiny adults, 3½ to 5 inches long. Although there is no parental care of the young, the ring-necks are social snakes, often occurring in colonies, and many times eggs are laid in communal nests. The eggs are elongated, about an inch long, white with yellow ends.

What good is a ring-necked snake? What harm does it do? What is its economic importance? I can answer these questions: 1. No good, but just as good as you or I. 2. Ditto. 3. Ditto.

The next question is: What on earth is it doing on the kitchen table at the crèche scene? The answer is, the same thing as all the other figures. It is representing blessings and prayers for peace among all creatures, sentiments unique to humans and expressed rarely but mostly at this time of year. We bring the animals into play on our greeting cards, in our family photos. This year we put the dog on ours, for instance. These animals symbolize innocence and beauty to us humans. Most people include a few birds and kittens in

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the peace and innocence basket, but it's true you don't get a lot of rubber snakes in there. Of course I know why this is, but I am campaigning against it. I think it is a sorry thing to equate the snake, the spider, the raven, the owl with any of the formless evils concocted by the human imagination. Same thing goes for ticks, mosquitoes, worms, slugs, leeches, and even, you guessed it, other people.

If we want to rid the world of evil we have to quit giving it a body and bombing the hell out of it. It has no body. It is neither a snake nor a person from the other side of the world speaking a language I don't know (yet). What is it then? I say it is fear and ignorance. How do we fight it? For a start, let's invite those others to our table and start to learn their language, their lifestyle. Let's know about the raised tail of the little snake and the way it touches and rubs heads with others of its kind. Let's not load it up with our nightmares and fairytales. And then let's not do that with each other, either. The more we don't do that, snake by snake, the more we won't ever do it anymore, anywhere.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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CATA Exhibit at Pittsfield's Lichtenstein Center

Community Access to the Arts (CATA) is pleased to announce that its traveling art exhibit, CATA Art on Tour, will open at The Lichtenstein Center for the Arts on January 14, 2009, and run through February 7. A reception will be held on Thursday, January 15, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

CATA provides visual and performing arts workshops for over five hundred people with disabilities in Berkshire County. Funded by a grant from Berkshire Life Charitable Foundation, CATA Art on Tour allows the community to view the results of hundreds of visual arts workshops that take place annually in therapeutic, educational, and cultural settings and in the CATA studio on 70 Railroad Street in Great Barrington. A number of community members joined Berkshire Life Charitable Foundation in sponsoring the traveling exhibit, including Carol and George Minkoff, Leslie and Steve Shatz, Elaine and Ben Silberstein, and Marjorie and Sherwood Sumner.

CATA employs twenty-five faculty artists. Visual arts faculty includes Laura Christensen, Susie Hardcastle, Pat Hogan, Leslie Klein, Marlene Marshall, Maria Mazzocco, Senta Reis, Janice Shields, and Michael Wolski. All artwork is for sale and CATA participants receive 50 percent commission.

The Lichtenstein Center for the Arts is a city-owned arts center in downtown Pittsfield that offers year-round classes and features a gallery and performance space with changing exhibitions, a ceramics studio, darkroom, and nine working artist studios. The Lichtenstein Center for the Arts gallery is located at 28 Renne Avenue in downtown Pittsfield, and is free to the public, Wednesday through Saturday, 12 noon to 5 p.m. For more information call 413-499-9348 or visit www.culturalpittsfield.com.

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The Big Six

Oakdale, PA, Population 1,500
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Mid-July, 1952
Saturday, 7 p.m.

A freshly minted US quarter sweats within my clenched fist as I enter the dirt parking lot adjacent to Yarmul's Tavern. Twenty feet overhead a giant banner stretches between telephone poles. Bold blue letters jump off a yellow background:

VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
SUMMER CARNIVAL

My pulse quickens to calliope music, a sea of lights, and the twenty-five cents at my disposal. Enough for a few carnival rides, or maybe a hot dog and a bottle of pop. But first things first. Gotta establish my turf.

I remember my brand new Hopalong Cassidy wristwatch. Pretentiously, I cock my left arm and study my wrist, hoping one of my buddies will notice. To my satisfaction, Ookie Cincola takes the bait.

"Hey, Jewboy, nice watch! Whadja do, steal it?"

I stiff-arm his shoulder, knocking him off balance. "No, ya dumb Dago. It's a birthday present from my sister."

Unfazed, Ookie sidles up to me. "Lemme see. Whoozat? Hopalong?"

Proudly, I extend my forearm, and as Ookie opines about the accuracy of the cowboy star's profile, our huddled pose attracts three of our buddies. Bobby Gamble, a year older and bigger than the rest of us, pushes Ookie aside and grabs my wrist.

"Shoot," he scoffs. "That ain't Hopalong. The hat's too big."

Offended, I pull away. "Yes it is! It's a ten-gallon! It's supposta be big!"

The others jump in. Eddie Porter, Bobby's principal toady, pipes up in his chirpy soprano. "Yeah, that's not a cowboy hat. That looks like sumpin' my old man wears."

I turn on him, seizing on the fact that Eddie's father is unemployed.

"Shut up, you *girl*. Your old man can't even *afford* a hat."

Eddie's defeated expression allows me a flash of satisfaction until Tommy McCrory says the hat might be the right size but it looks to him like the wrong color.

I snap at him too. "Whaddya want? It's a watch. How they gonna get the right color on that?"

"Well, maybe," Tommy concedes, "but anyway I like the Lone Ranger better. He's a lot tougher than Hopalong."

To this assertion I have no retort. Hopalong's a good guy and all, but nowhere near as fast with his fists – or his gun – as the masked man.

"Yeah," Eddie adds. "And Hopalong don't have no radio show neither."

I choose to let that one go as well, partly because it's true but mostly because I'm now feeling a tad remorseful about ranking on Eddie's dad.

Bobby Gamble cuts off the debate when he spots one of our grade school teachers strolling through the carnival grounds with her fiancé.

"What the hell!" he blurts. "Look at that! He's got his hand right on her butt!"

Instantly galvanized, the rest of us contribute our own bawdy observations, mostly in language we don't really understand. Our precocious vulgarity transforms us into a single-minded rabble, kicking up dust and taunting any safe target, mostly younger boys who have the misfortune of crossing our path. Ookie growls and startles a little kid. We dub ourselves "The Wolfpack."

Our mascot is an underweight imp by the name of Jojo Malanowski. Jojo is locally famous for a most unusual talent. Because of a chronic intestinal disorder he is able to defecate on command. This comes in especially handy on Halloween, when he sets fire to a loaded paper bag, drops it on someone's front porch, and rings the doorbell. When the unsuspecting occupant stamps out the fire and soils his shoe, we come out of hiding and run away, slapping Jojo on the back and laughing ourselves sick while the irate victim calls our ancestral legitimacy into question.

Now, at the carnival, Jojo is in one of his prankish moods. He approaches a group of girls our age. Among them is

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Mary Alice Beaumont, a classmate who has entered precocious puberty and suffers constant indignities over her freakish height and budding breasts. Caught up in the heady moment, Jojo points to Mary Alice's chest, breaks into a moronic grin and makes an obscene twisting gesture with his hands.

"Hey, Giraffe," he leers, "how 'bout a feel?"

Jojo has miscalculated, as only Jojo can. The rest of us freeze, anticipating a vengeful response from Mary Alice.

She doesn't disappoint us. In a flash she turns and lunges at JoJo, who is forced to cross his skinny arms in front of his face while Mary Alice rains blows on his head and shoulders, all the while hurling invectives and, worst of all, threatening to report this incident to his mother. For her finale, she kicks him in the shins, then triumphantly turns to rejoin her cheering girlfriends.

As she walks away, Jojo feigns nonchalance. "Pfff," he sneers. "Izzat all you got?"

Mary Alice's fists clench. When she spins around there is fire in her eyes, but Jojo stands his ground.

And then Mary Alice, the same Mary Alice who attends church every Sunday, angelically entering the sanctuary while holding a bible in her upturned hands, the same Mary Alice who walks with baby steps in a fruitless attempt to detract from her awkward height, this same Mary Alice advances menacingly toward Jojo, stops for a breathless moment, and then snarls up a wad of foul yellow sputum and launches a major league hocker that scores a bull's eye in the middle of JoJo's chest. As we hoop and holler, the mortified Jojo paws at the glop on his shirt and looks plaintively in our direction, but to no avail. We are merciless, continuing to torment him for getting his ass kicked by a girl.

Eventually we tire of our torture, Jojo dusts off his humiliation and we move on. The Ferris wheel beckons, offering the intriguing prospect of a mechanical breakdown that could maroon us on its high swinging benches. Or the dizzying Tilt-A-Whirl, which leaves its victims staggering around like a bunch of undersized drunks.

We argue over where to go and split into smaller groups. Soon I grow restless. The other side of the lot catches my eye, the adult section where they offer high-stakes gambling. I drift away and move in that direction.

On the periphery are games that are open to kids, like nickel Bingo and Penny Pitch, but I'm drawn to the big time. I look around furtively, then skulk under the velvet ropes into the forbidden area. No one stops me. I begin to case the individual games: Blackjack. Poker. Chuck-A-Luck. And the most enticing of all, the Big Six wheel.

I inch closer. The wheel is huge, bigger even than the beefy steelworkers who have spilled out of Yarmul's Tavern and are now bellied up to the front and sides of the booth, swilling their Iron City beers and throwing paper money around. Dice are pictured on the wheel's spaces and the numbers 1 through 6 are painted in four different sections on the betting counter. The operator grunts as he grabs the handle, leveraging his weight to start it rolling. Immediately the bettors exhort their numbers to come up while it goes through its clockwise rotation. As it slows there is a brief, hopeful silence until the operator announces the results. The winners cheer him. The losers curse, especially the rowdy steelworkers.

I note that there are three dice per slot on the wheel, but the number six comes up at least once each time. I watch as most of the players ignore this fact and continue to play the other five numbers. They are oblivious but I am not surprised. This is not the first time I have observed this phenomenon: *I see things that are missed by others*.

No one stops me as I approach the booth and reach up to place my quarter, the minimum bet, on the number six square. I wait stiffly as the wheel turns. When it stops the operator bellows.

"Three lovely sixes!"

He goes about his task of collecting and paying off, starting at the other end of the booth. With each exchange he grunts, his tone the same whether someone has won or lost.

I hold my breath as he approaches my spot. I expect him to tell me I haven't won anything because it's illegal for me to be there, but he grunts without comment and places three quarters next to mine. The booth's overhead lights glare

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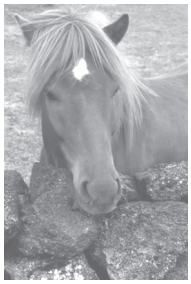

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off the coins. I blink. A dollar. A dollar! I gather up the quarters and step back. A dollar! Seventy-five cents will buy a new baseball at Moore's Hardware and I'd still have my original quarter. Prudence enters my calculations. Walk away, I tell myself. Walk away. My mind races, recalling my father's story about a black sheep cousin, a gambler who hit the numbers for a fortune, then blew it all and came looking for a loan three months later.

But I don't walk away. My eyes remain fixed on the wheel, which spits out yet another quarter, this time to a skinny woman in a shapeless dress who has usurped my number six spot. Incredibly she collects her winnings, takes a long drag on the cigarette dangling from her lower lip, and moves to another number.

That's it, I decide. It's a sign. I move back in and reclaim my territory. Before the wheel turns, my original quarter – the lucky one – is back down on the table. Another six comes up, then another. I decide to parlay my winnings by putting down fifty cents.

No luck. No sixes.

Immediately I realize that I have offended the wheel. My sense of cosmic equilibrium tells me I will have to defer betting for exactly six cycles before resuming my acquaintance. After waiting dutifully I reapproach, this time holding only one quarter in my right hand, the remainder concealed behind my back.

Success. Another six, another quarter. I place each subsequent coin face up, in precisely the same spot. A blur of wheel revolutions, a stream of quarters. I stop to count. Two-twenty-five! Real money! Forget the new baseball at Moore's Hardware. Now I have enough for that incredible catcher's mitt in their window! I envision myself in the Oakdale Tigers Little League uniform, pounding my new glove and exhorting the pitcher to throw some heat. Yeah! My teammates are gonna piss their pants!

I breathe deeply and look around, wondering if my friends have discovered that I'm in taboo territory.

And then it hits me.

It's getting dark. Under the lights in the booth I hadn't noticed the gathering dusk. My curfew. A volcano of panic erupts in me. I begin to cough. My head is pounding in sync with my heartbeat. There's no way I can get all this money in the house without getting caught. And how would I explain the new catcher's mitt anyway? My father will know for sure. He always knows. He has eyes in the back of his head. I recall again the story he told about our gambling cousin, and his grim demeanor when he told it, and I know that in our house gambling is a grievous sin. A punishable sin. I shudder at the consequences of getting caught.

Ideas start to fly out of me, each one less practical than the last. I consider hiding the quarters, burying them maybe, but there's no time. I can't tell my friends; they won't be able to keep a secret this big.

Maybe I can stuff them in my shoe. No, there's too many of them, they'd make me limp.

I force myself to slow down my breathing.

Think, I tell myself. *Think*, dammit!

And finally I come up with the only viable solution.

I will have to lose on purpose.

That's the answer. Phew! No problem. I'll just start playing the other numbers.

With a sense of relief I place a quarter on the number three and another on the one. The wheel turns. The attendant announces. "A deuce, a five, and an ace." Damn! I lose one quarter but win another. I'm still even. That's okay, that's okay. It'll work out. I decide to use the fifty-cent strategy. My shaky hand places two more quarters on the four.

No! I win two more quarters and now I have nearly three dollars! This is serious. I'm in trouble. I begin to slap down quarters like a madman. Some of them slip through my nervous fingers and fall to the ground. I ignore them, hoping no one will notice, but the booth attendant gives me an odd look and I am compelled to pick them up. Maybe I should offer an explanation. No. No time for that. I have a job to do, and in a hurry. I continue to play any number but six, but at least ten more minutes pass before things go my way.

Finally my last quarter goes down. I hold my breath as the wheel slows and the offensive coin is swept away. I close my eyes. Thank God.

After a quick look around I exhale and turn sharply toward the exit. The booth attendant grunts. Out of the corner of my eye I catch a glimpse of him. He is staring in my direction and shaking his head.

— David Shifrin

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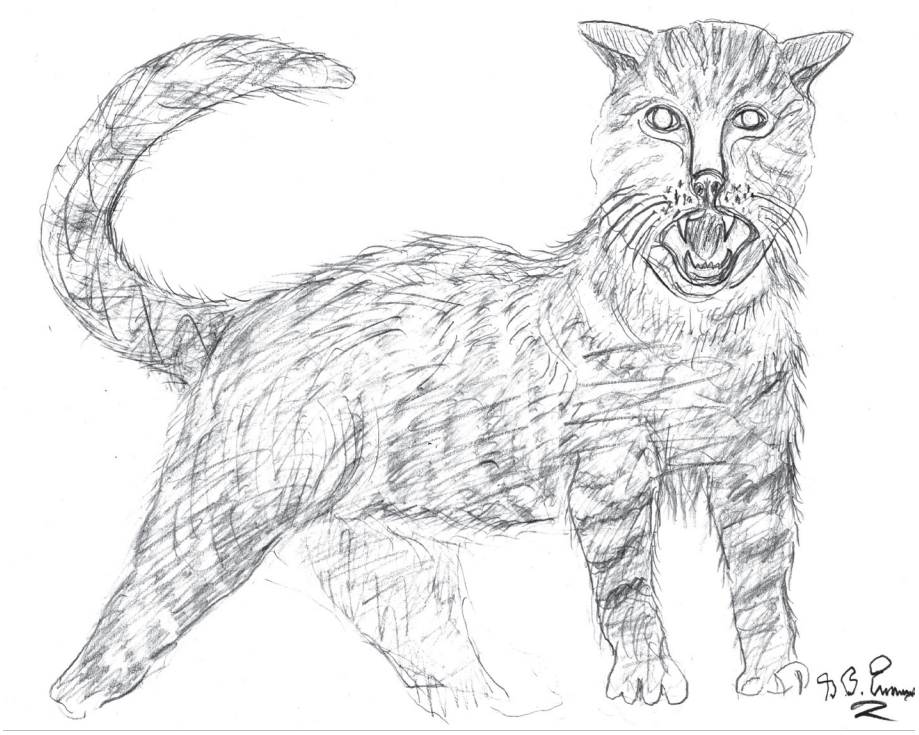
Snarly Owl: A Feral Cat



I saw my first real feral cat in Monterey a few years ago. It darted in front of my car across the intersection of Gould and River Roads, so I stopped and got out to have a good look. When I finally spotted the fierce defiant face scowling back at me it reminded me of a picture David Ziegler had showed me of a captured great horned owl, its eyes rounded with fright, and it's beak threatening anyone not to come closer!

I was so impressed with its wild demeanor that, like E. T. Seton, somewhat of a wildlife reporter mentor for my writing (as was the late David McAllester as well), who gave human names to his subjects, for example in *Wild Animals I have Known,* I have decided to call him "Snarly Owl." After several generations of going wild and reproducing their own, feral cats often become much larger than their domestic parents and also revert to the coloring of the wild ancestors of our pet tabbies.

A few years ago it was estimated that there were some forty million feral cats in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Many of them live in colonies centered on crude shelters and a predictable food supply, often near barns and in cities. The cat's predatory instincts can make it seem to have a Jekyll and Hyde split personality, as even the most loveable pet can become carnivorous after the sun goes down.

But the transition from tame to wild might last for years and over several litters per year. It is also possible for a feral cat to revert back to domesticity and turn over a new leaf in life with the best of intentions, like many of us making a New Year's resolution. Several national societies have been formed to help reclaim cats from their wild hunting condition. The last time I saw Snarly Owl, the face was scarred, the fur matted, and it looked as hungry as any creature I have ever seen. In *Wild Animals I have Known,* the end of the story was not always a happy one. But perhaps because I gave it a name, this cat will be luckier than most and will have more than two lives. Let's hope that in the cruel winter storms it is curled up by the fire at home where it belongs .

— George B. Emmons

ॐ

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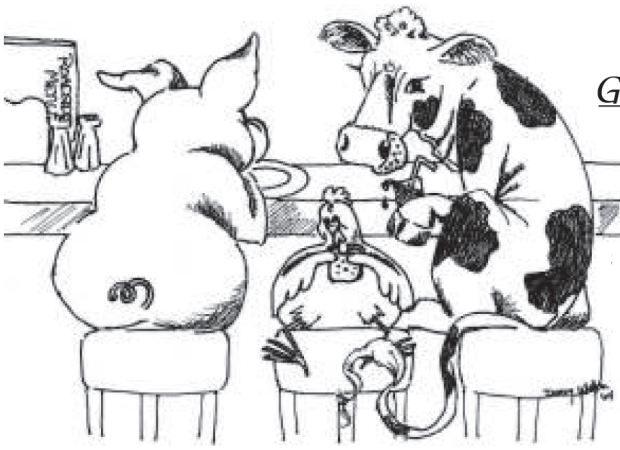

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Goodbye David
A Memoir by Leyla Tonak

Probably, at some point you have—unless you are incredibly lucky—lost someone important to you. Unfortunately this happens so often that kids get desensitized and don't pay much attention when someone in their sixth grade class puts up their hand to talk about their late grandmother. But sometimes what they have to say might actually be interesting, so when you have read my story I hope you will agree that it is worth writing about.

Besides, I owe it to David. I remember, painfully at first but now fondly, him striding across the field, leaping over a stream, humming, and finally raising his voice as he played the old piano … explaining about the Navaho Indians while sitting cross-legged in his teepee … skipping stones on the pond …

"And Skunny Wundy took a stone and fitted it into his sling," he would say, recounting the Navaho tales which held us spellbound. Skunny Wundy was the hero of most of his stories. He was a little boy who lived with the animals of the forest. The animals usually had stories too. My sister and I liked the one where jackal learned to juggle his eyes but lost them and ended up with stones in their empty sockets.

I remember David like never before now. So many little things I never noticed. He was the most wonderful grandfather in the world.

One night when I was feeling pleasantly happy the phone rang. Lazily, I followed my mother into the living room. A little of my contentedness ebbed away as my mother's face fell and she muttered, "Oh my God" in a voice barely audible.

My grandfather was in the hospital unconscious from a stroke. We waited two days without news. Then finally on the third day we got a call. David had died holding my grandmother's hand.

I couldn't cry—I was in shock. It wasn't until later that I burst into tears while scribbling in my journal. It bears the blots to this day.

We took the first flight we could to Massachusetts where his daughter, Bonner, met us at the airport and gave us the details. Grandpa David had gone for his usual walk one morning and had not come back—later they learned that high on a small mountain next to his house David had collapsed on a brush pile with a massive stroke.

After a few hours my Grandma Beryl sent someone to look for him. She was troubled, for although Grandpa always left a note in the mornings that day's had been special. At the end he had written "I love you" and had drawn a small sign of a bug that he and his family drew when he was a child.

"It was like he knew it was coming" said Bonner, "I don't know."

He was rushed to the hospital and remained unconscious until he drew his last breath and faded away—from the world, but not from out hearts. My grandma swears he squeezed her hand in farewell.

The memorial was beautiful. There was no burial—he was cremated. The memorial was held under a big tent with piles of food. Everyone sat and talked about David. It was a celebration of him. Everyone was sad for the house. It would have to be sold along with the acres of beautiful land that had been nurtured, tended and loved by David McAllester.

My Grandma Beryl returned to Canada with us. She now sleeps in our spare room, has her own chair, and corrects my sister's grammar. I think she is lonely.

We all are without him. As our car drove away I had looked back at the big house and flowered landscape and realized how hard it is to say goodbye. Goodbye house, goodbye trees, goodbye teepee pond duck house, but hardest of all,

Goodbye David.

Leyla Tonak, granddaughter of David and Beryl McAllester, lived with David and Beryl in Monterey for a little over a year, during which time she attended the Monterey Kindergarten. She now lives in Nova Scotia and is in the eighth grade. David McAllester died on April 30, 2006.

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Remembering Nancy Adams

Nancy Duggar Adams, age 95, beloved wife of the late John Farnham Adams, passed away on Friday, November 28, 2008, at the Whitney Center in Hamden, Connecticut. She was born in St. Louis, Missouri, to the late Dr. Benjamin Minge Duggar, who discovered the antibiotic aureomycin, and Marie Robertson Duggar. Nancy graduated from the University of Wisconsin and was a member of Pi Beta Phi Sorority. She lived most of her life in the New Haven area, and she spent many wonderful summers with friends and family at their summer cottage in Monterey. Nancy was a poet and writer, and, in her eighties, she published two books of poetry. She was a board member of the Creative Arts Workshop, the National YWCA, and a deacon of the Church of the Redeemer. She is survived by a sister, Emily Saunders, and three children: Charles Adams of Seattle, Washington, Robert Adams of Fairfax, Virginia, and Katharine Walker of Boston, and five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Contributions in Nancy's memory may be made to the scholarship fund of the Creative Arts Workshop, 80 Audubon St., New Haven, CT 06510, or to the Church of the Redeemer, 185 Cold Spring St., New Haven, CT 06511. For information or to send a condolence, see obituary at www.beecherandbennett.com.

Remembering Melvin Kraft

Melvin Kraft, a longtime resident of Monterey, passed away peacefully on November 22, at the age of 82. Born in the Bronx, N.Y. in 1926, he was the son of the late Sadie and George Kraft.

He served in the Army during World War II and was a graduate of Ohio State University. He continued his education at the Harvard Law School, where he graduated in 1953.

After graduation from law school, he tried cases in New York City for Fortune 500 clients for 24 years, retiring in 1988. Contract interpretation and its unique opportunities for argument and advocacy fascinated him from the onset of his career. He later became attracted to the arbitration clauses contained within the industrial commercial contracts, and was appointed arbitrator, and ultimately to the chairmanship of three arbitration panels in complex cases. He also served as a member of the Grievance Committee of the Association of the Bar of New York City, which handled cases of lawyer misconduct.

As his own cases became more complex, it became frequently necessary to consult experts and engage them as witnesses. Consequently, he was appointed editor of "Using Expert Witnesses in Civil Cases," P.L.I. 2nd Ed. 1982. Subsequently, he served as Faculty Chairman of the Practicing Law Institute.

When he retired at the age of 62, he was invited to give guest lectures on dispute resolution in the Sloan School of MIT. While teaching he kept hearing echoes of his courtroom battles as a young lawyer defending indigent criminal defendants. In the hardest fought and most memorable case, he was assigned by the court to defend an aging immigration lawyer of Hispanic origin who faced the threat of a conviction

on immigration fraud felony charges and imprisonment for his remaining years. The experience left him with the desire to tell the story of those trials, and he decided to fictionalize it. The result was his novel *His Soul Weapon*, which was featured in a profile of him in the Harvard Law School Bulletin of Spring 2006. In a literary sense, the writing of the novel became the epilogue of Melvin Kraft's story as a trial lawyer. He was also invited to participate in a colloquy on his career as a litigator at the Harvard Law School in the winter of 2009.

Melvin was a remarkable person, a devoted husband, and a wise and loving parent. He was a good friend and compassionate advisor to many. The HLS profile described the tone of his book as one of "gentle intensity." Indeed, he had a gentle intensity, one that everyone who knew him felt and felt lifted by. An avid reader of many subjects, a walker and music lover, he was nurtured by his rich interests and the lives of those he loved.

Melvin Kraft spent his last 20 years in Monterey, Mass., and Palm Beach, Fla. He leaves his wife of 42 years, Katherine; his two children, Kathleen and David; his daughter-in-law, Franca; and his grandson, Benjamin. He will be greatly missed.

ॐ

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It's Good to Be Part of the Monterey Community

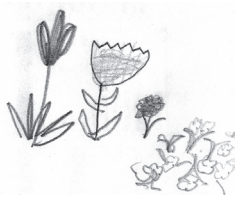
To the Editor:

Two thousand and nine is here and with it comes hope, although timorous, for a better America on all counts. For my family and me it means climbing up out of the abyss of grief after losing my 18-year-old grandson, Matthew Christopher, in September.

But I can't let 2008 go by without being grateful for all the kind words, sympathy, and deeds that we have received from friends, neighbors, and former Montereyites who have moved away and keep in touch through that umbilical cord, the *Monterey News*. Thank you to those who said prayers, sent notes, and gave hugs. To those who said, "There are no words," and said them anyway, they really help.

It's good to be part of the community that is Monterey.

— Gige O'Connell



Santa Answers His Letters in Monterey

To the Editor:

My daughter Sophia, who is three and a half, wrote her letter to Santa a couple of weeks ago and brought it to the post office, where our lovely postmaster told her she would put it on the truck right away so Santa would get it in time. That alone made my daughter's day. But it gets better—the day before Christmas my husband went to get the mail and my daughter had a letter from Santa in the box! My husband went to the counter to say thank you, but the nice ladies at the post office said that they had not been responsible for the letter's delivery, but that Walter had. Sophie was so excited to get a letter from Santa and find out that she was on the "good girl list."

My husband and I really want to say thank you to Walter even though we don't know who he is. We hope he realizes how much it meant to our family and how it made our daughter smile. That to us is the true meaning of Christmas and one of the many fantastic benefits of living in the community that is Monterey.

— Bridget Krans

Super Highway Department

To the Editor:

Just a note to let Maynard Forbes and the highway crew know how much we at New England Keswick appreciate the diligence and super service you always render. I realize Chestnut Hill Road is not the super highway that demands the first attention, but you still always do more than you might get away with. Rich and his coworker are here now clearing away all the downed trees along the road. He is just one more good man on your team.

— Doug Hanna

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Calendar

Skating rink is open; see p. 5 for hours.

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 4 p.m., Town Hall.

Saturdays in January: Hot Chocolate Saturdays at Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. See p. 7.

Wednesday, January 7: After-School Kid's Kitchen classes for 5-to-12-year-olds begin at Community Health Program Nutrition Center, 94 West Avenue, Great Barrington. Information, 413-429-8110. See p. 10.

Thursday, January 8: Free Blood Pressure Clinic, Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 p.m.

Sunday, January 11: Nature-inspired writing group led by Pauline Clarke and Tammis Coffin, 1–4 p.m., Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield. Information, registration, 413-298-3239 x3000. See p. 11.

Thursday, January 15: Brush burning season opens. See p. 6.

Saturday, January 17:

Pete Seeger, the Power of Song, documentary film for community discussion, 7 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse basement. Free, see p. 7.

Birds along the River, birding walk with naturalist, 2–3:30 p.m., Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield. See p. 7.

Monday, January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day; Town Hall, Library closed.

Wednesday, January 21: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m. Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Program "Positive Aging" presented by Professional Certified Coach and "Retirement Revolutionary" Lin Shreiber. See p. 6.

Saturday, January 24: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Joe Baker. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions. Your support makes it possible for us to continue publishing. We know you receive requests from many worthy organizations for financial help and are grateful that you include the *Monterey News* in your giving.

Robert & Lynne Horvath
Ken & Laurel Kahn
Roy M. Gottlieb

The Observer
November 26–December 25

High temp. (12/11)	57°
Low temp. (12/8)	3°
Avg. high temp.	35.1°
Avg. low temp.	18.6°
Avg. temp.	26.9°
Total snowfall	23.1 in.
Total precipitation, on 23 days (rain and melted snow)	8.61 in.

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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (e-mail or computer disk if possible) by the 20th of the month before publication, addressed to the Editor. Submissions may also be left in the drop box on the loading dock of the Generaal Store. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free) to same address. We will set up an ad for your Monterey-based business or event, or advertisers may submit a computer formatted ad (pdf, tif, or jpeg format—Word files not acceptable) with graphics. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montnews@localnet.com.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, pp. 12, 22, 23; Maureen Banner, pp. 6, 7, 10, 15, 20; Ella Carlson, p. 22; George Emmons, p. 19; Bonner McAllester, p. 14; Glynis Oliver, p. 5.

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